

Serial No. 10/634,677

AMENDMENT TO THE DRAWINGS:

The attached sheets of drawings include changes to Figs.

2 and 3. The reference numeral 34 has been inserted to indicate a stop member. The reference numeral 36 has been inserted to indicate a common operating surface. No new matter has been added.

Attachment: Replacement formal drawing sheets 1 and 2.

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of the application is requested in view of the present amendment.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite a multifunctional pushbutton switch comprising a plurality of pushbutton switching units having actuation tappets and pushbutton surfaces being arranged close to each other in a common operating surface, a common switch housing with guiding means for movably guiding said actuation tappets in said switch housing, a cap mounted onto said common switch housing, said cap comprising a relatively rigid plastic frame with one cutout window, said one cutout window corresponding in shape and size to the circumference of said pushbutton surfaces, said cap further comprising a silicone membrane stretched over said one cutout window and an outer surface of said silicone membrane forming said common operating surface.

U.S. 4,638,131 to Kidd et al. ("Kidd") does not disclose a cap comprising a relatively rigid plastic frame with one cutout window, and wherein said cap further comprises a silicone membrane stretched over said one cutout window as and an outer surface of silicone membrane forming a common operating surface recited in claim 1. In Kidd, cover pad 84 does not have a silicone membrane stretched over cutouts 90 to form a common operating surface. Thus, Kidd does not disclose the cap recited in claim 1.

Further the United Kingdom patent document GB 2,353,762 to Rush ("Rush") does not cure the deficiencies of Kidd. Rush does not disclose a cap comprising a relatively rigid plastic

frame with one cutout window, and wherein said cap further comprises a silicone membrane stretched over said one cutout window as recited in claim 1. Rush does not disclose a rigid plastic frame. Further, a combination of Kidd and Rush does not disclose or suggest a rigid plastic frame with one cutout window which corresponds in shape and size to the circumference of pushbutton surfaces as recited in claim 1. Thus, a combination of Kidd and Rush does not make claim 1 obvious.

In fact, no prior art discloses the structure of claim 1 or makes claim 1 obvious.

Claim 2 depends from claim 1 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 1. Further, claim 2 recites the multifunctional pushbutton switch according to claim 1, wherein guide walls of the switch housing extend all the way to the inner surface of the silicone membrane between the actuation tappets. Neither Kidd nor Rush disclose guide walls extending to the inner surface of a silicone membrane. Thus, neither Kidd nor Rush disclose the guide walls recited in claim 2. Further, since neither reference discloses the invention of claim 2, a combination of the references does not make claim 2 obvious.

Claim 3 has been amended. It is respectfully submitted that claim 3 and claim 4 (which depends from claim 3) are no longer rejectable under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Claim 5 has been amended. It is respectfully submitted that claim 5 is no longer rejectable under 35 U.S.C. § 112.

Claims 3-6 depend directly or indirectly from claim 1 and define over the prior art for the same reasons as claim 1 and for specific limitations recited therein. Claims 3-6 constitute further limitations to allowable claim 1. Thus, claims 3-6 should be allowed.

Claim 7 depends from claim 1 and is allowable the same reasons as claim 1. Further, claim 7 recites the multifunctional pushbutton switch according to claim 1, wherein the plastic frame and the silicone membrane are joined with an inter-material bond. Neither Kidd, Rush nor U.S. 6,680,450 to Frohne et al. ("Frohne") disclose a frame and membrane made of different materials as recited in claim 7. Thus, the references do not disclose the inter-material bond of plastic and silicone recited in claim 7. Further, since none of the references discloses the invention of claim 7, a combination of the references does not make claim 7 obvious.

Claim 8 depends from claim 7 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 7 and for specific limitations recited therein. Claim 8 constitutes further limitations to allowable claim 7. Thus, claim 8 should be allowed.

New claim 9 has been added by this amendment. It is respectfully submitted that claim 9 is patentable over the prior art of record, taken individually or in combination. Accordingly, the applicant respectfully requests allowance of claim 9.

Claim 9 recites a multifunctional pushbutton switch comprising a plurality of pushbutton switching units having actuation tappets and pushbutton surfaces, said pushbutton

surfaces being arranged close to each other and adjacent a common operating surface, a common switch housing with guiding means for movably guiding said actuation tappets in said switch housing, a cap mounted onto said common switch housing, said cap comprising a relatively rigid plastic frame with at least one cutout window, said at least one cutout window corresponding in shape and size to the circumference of at least one of said pushbutton surfaces, said cap further comprising a silicone membrane stretched over said at least one cutout window, an outer surface of said silicone membrane forming said common operating surface and, said cap comprising **two components bonded together one component comprising said** rigid plastic frame and said other component comprising said silicone membrane.

Neither Kidd, Rush nor Frohne disclose a cap comprising two components boded together one component comprising a rigid plastic frame and the other component comprising a silicone membrane. Kidd, Rush and Frohne do not disclose a rigid plastic frame and a silicone membrane bonded together. Thus, the references do not disclose the cap recited in claim 9. Further since none of the references disclose the invention of claim 9, a combination of the references does not make claim 9 obvious.

New claim 10 depends from claim 9 and is allowable for the same reasons as claim 9. Further, claim 10 recites the multifunctional pushbutton switch according to claim 9, wherein guide walls of the switch housing extend all the way to the inner surface of the silicone membrane between the

actuation tappets. Neither Kidd, Rush nor Frohne disclose guide walls extending to the inner surface of a silicone membrane. Thus, neither Kidd, Rush nor Frohne disclose the guide walls recited in claim 10. Further, since none of the references disclose the invention of claim 10, a combination of the references does not make claim 10 obvious.


New claim 12 has been added by this amendment. Claim 12 depends from claim 9 and defines over the prior art for the same reasons as claim 9 and for the specific limitations recited therein. Claim 12 constitutes further limitations to allowable claim 9. Thus, claim 12 should be allowed.

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Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in
the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account

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Respectfully submitted,


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